

## ***FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** August 8, 2013

**Agenda Item:** Elk Management in Areas with Brucellosis 2014 Work Plan

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Approval of Proposed Rule

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 1 hour

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### **Background**

In January 2013, the FWP Commission endorsed elk management recommendations from a citizen working group for application in areas with brucellosis (Designated Surveillance Area as described by the Montana Department of Livestock). The Commission also endorsed a 2013 work plan in February and scheduled a review of efforts and review for Aug. 8. The 2013 work plan included hazing, fencing and dispersal hunts as management actions available for implementation. Examples of all three were applied in 2013. While recommendations included the incorporation of local working groups, that component has not been successfully identified in all areas despite FWP efforts to do so.

In addition, a 2014 work plan will be presented for public review and Commission approval on Aug. 8. The proposed plan has been assembled by FWP with input from the statewide working group that met in Bozeman on July 11 to review efforts to date. That meeting was open to the public and included a public comment period. The plan offers several clarifications based upon 2013 experiences and expands upon the 2013 work efforts to include a renewed emphasis on local working groups and education/outreach. Specific management actions would be available for implementation after public review and comment and final adoption in October 2013. Any work plans developed by local working groups may be proposed in addition or as a replacement to this plan.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, or with deletions as per staff justifications, public comment and/or Commission discussion.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

The public comment period on any adopted proposal will run through 5 p.m. Monday, Sept. 9, with final adoption at the Oct. 10 F&W Commission meeting.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends the Commission adopt the proposed 2014 annual work plan. This reflects the experience gained from efforts in 2013, inputs from the statewide working group and the public and additional work necessary to fully address the original recommendations.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move to adopt the proposed 2014 annual work plan for elk management in areas with brucellosis as proposed by FWP.